



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

COUNTRY PROFILE

JANUARY 2005



This new highway, connecting Kabul and Kandahar, means the rural population can reach jobs, schools, health clinics, and markets for their produce more easily. More than two decades of war left the original highway devastated, like much of country's infrastructure. USAID, working with the Japanese and Afghan governments and the Louis Berger Group, demined and paved the 389-kilometer road. This is part of a multi-national effort to rebuild the entire Ring Road, which links Afghanistan's four major cities.

AFGHANISTAN SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 2001
Capital: Kabul
Population: 26.8 million
GDP per person (1994 est): \$521

**For more information,
see www.usaid.gov
Keyword: Afghanistan**

OVERVIEW

Years of civil war, compounded by Taliban rule and the worst drought in memory, have devastated Afghanistan. At the time the Taliban was forced



out of power, half of Afghanistan's people lived in absolute poverty and were unemployed. Virtually all the country's institutions and much of its infrastructure were destroyed. To support the war on terrorism and to keep with America's tradition of assisting those in need, USAID is working to build a safe, stable society that meets the needs of its people and

eliminates an environment that breeds terrorism.

PROGRAMS

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION NEARLY DOUBLED

Agriculture is a way of life for 70 percent of Afghanistan's people. However, instability, coupled with the region's four-year drought, devastated the country's farms. USAID renovates irrigation systems, provides fertilizer and seeds and builds roads to markets. Over the past few years, agricultural production has nearly doubled, increasing farmers' incomes.

To stop the illegal drug trade that has been a major source of income for the country when there were few alternatives, USAID provides incentives to farms to stop planting poppy. USAID also provides training, demonstration centers, and farm-related business training to farmers to help them increase their income from legitimate crops.

GIRLS GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND MORE AFGHANS GET BASIC HEALTH CARE

In 2002, only about 32 percent of school-age children were enrolled. Ninety-seven percent of the country's girls did not attend school. Eighty percent of existing schools were either severely damaged or destroyed at the end of the Taliban rule. USAID has distributed textbooks, school supplies and training materials and is rebuilding 1,000 schools. USAID has also trained 50,000 teachers, built a women's dormitory at Kabul University and provided food rations as an incentive for families to send their daughters to school.

The health status of Afghans is among the worst in the world. One out of every four Afghan children dies before the age of five, and about the num-

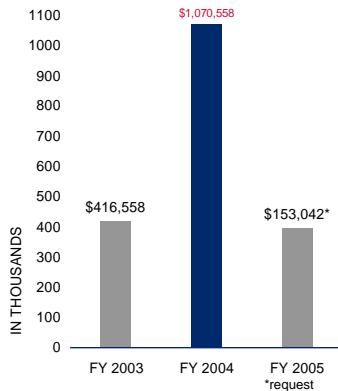


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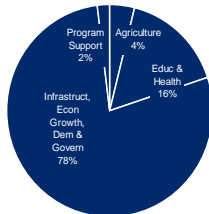
AFGHANISTAN

COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN



FY 2004 Budget
Percentage for Each Program Area



FY 2003 & 2004 include supplementals.
FY 2005 request does not.

ber of mothers who die due to pregnancy complications is one of the highest rates in the world. USAID provides health services to more than two million people, 90 percent of whom are women and children. USAID has funded the treatment of 700,000 cases of malaria and vaccinated five million children.

AFGHAN GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY STRENGTHENED

Years of corruption, brutality and tyranny imposed by the Taliban reduced Afghanistan to political, economic and social ruin. USAID has supported the new democracy by registering 10 million Afghans to vote for the June 2004 elections and providing constitutional and legal experts to work with the committees drafting the constitution and new laws. USAID also funded a radio network to connect the central government with the remote provinces, so they can communicate reliably for the first time.

Afghanistan has a culture of radio listenership, but under the Taliban, music was forbidden and news was tightly controlled. USAID works with enterprising Afghans and media NGOs to rebuild communications networks and has started 19 independent radio stations. USAID has distributed more than 30,000 radios, provided satellite equipment to expand radio access to the entire country and trained and equipped local journalists to report on political, social and economic issues.

For years, Afghanistan had a dysfunctional economy based on illegal drug trading and war. USAID creates jobs to enable the Afghans to support their families and rebuild their country. USAID created short-term jobs for three million people and provided \$700,000 in small loans to help Afghans start their own businesses, giving people jobs and incomes. USAID also helped convert the old currency to a new one by training staff, transporting money and providing counting machines.

All parts of the economy struggle when poor roads prevent the transport of goods or a shortage of clean water affects a community's health. USAID has rebuilt roads to clinics and markets and reopened the Salang Tunnel, high in the mountains, which has reduced travel time by two and half days for common trips. The reconstruction of 389 kilometers of the major Kabul-Kandahar highway has revitalized entire villages. One and a half million people have benefited from water projects.

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